1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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is the belief in an original flood which covered the earth and, to the Murngin, was a prototype of the modern great floods that yearly inundate the countries of their clans and force them for their own safety into the high grounds, and at times even into the trees on the high grounds.

The west and northwest wind (rainy season winds) is called Barra. "Barra is Dua, it belongs to the same moiety as the snake and is sent by the snake," said the leader of one of the Dua clans to me. In other accounts it is said to be the snake. "Barra wind only brings nothing but rain and flood. After awhile that rain brings fish in the lakes and rivers and makes the grass grow up for bandicoot to eat and the tree flowers for flying-fox and opossum and plenty of fresh tucker [vegetable food] for black men. When the stringy bark comes it is Dua time."

The west wind brings grass and flood and holds until the trees flower, when the wind changes and comes from the north. Then all the people start looking for bush tucker, and, to continue with the native comment, "Dua rain and wind bring the wet season [maieing-nga, no-food time]. The west-wind part is first and it is the largest part."

The dry-season monsoon comes from the southeast, and for the natives northwest of those on the Gulf of Carpentaria, it is a land wind. The dry season is called Gu-tjer-a, and the southeast wind is known as Di-mur-u. "That Dimuru brings plenty tucker and yam and other bush food. There is plenty of fish in the billibongs and plenty sea birds' eggs and yams and all kinds of plums. When the plums finish the wind goes back to Barra [northwest monsoon]. The rain

with great rapidity. The maximum temperature in the shade during the day in this weather is 96°, and the minimum during the night is 65°.

"On the approach of the autumn equinox the N.W. monsoon gradually dies away, and is succeeded by the calms, variable winds, thunderstorms, and oppressive weather until about the end of April, when cooler weather is felt; the S.E. monsoon sets in, and the dry season may be said to have fairly commenced. The wind is characterized by a clear sky, enjoyable weather, heavy dews, and cold mornings and nights—so much so that blankets can be used when sleeping. It blows off the coast without intermission, and with great force, almost throughout the season, being in full heart between June and July. At Port Darwin and other places adjacent to the coast, the monsoon generally drops in the afternoon, and is sometimes succeeded by a sea breeze, which is merely local, and only extends to a few miles inland. The atmosphere is clear and dry, and rather hot during the middle of the day—the maximum temperature in the day being 89° and the minimum during the night 56°."

* See social organization, technology and the various rituals which are connected with this myth.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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●805 clouds are Dua and those lines of clouds that come from the west are Dua.

"The north wind blows and the weather can be wet or dry. It is Yiritja. This is also the time of the wind from the south. When black clouds appear [on the horizon] and Yiritja lightning comes from them, it is when the crocodile makes his nest and lays his eggs and the sting ray appears. It is Yiritja time now."

When the inland lakes dry up and the small streams disappear and many of the clan water holes are empty, "the thunder comes then and calls out for the rain." This is Raer-un-daer, the intermediate period between the dry season and the wet. The clouds from which thunder comes are called kur-ka (penis or male) mo-la-ma (cloud); they come from the south and east. A little later gur-ding gur-ding (the "woman cloud") comes from the west. "Those two meet and copulate." When this happens the "Snakes on the ground ["tucker ones"] put their tails together and copulate. Great mobs of the snakes do this."

"The inside meaning of those clouds is all the same as the snakes. They are snakes."

"The rainbow comes then [bar-i-el-la, light; ba-pi, snake]."[4]

821
776 The rainbow is sometimes seen as the python totem itself, at other times it is the house of the snake, and at still others the totemic trumpet. Since it is believed that when the Yurlunggur trumpet is made for the circumcision initiation the snake is inside, it follows that if the rainbow is the snake's house it is also the trumpet. "That one is a snake, he is also the snake's house. Bariella shows all the people that they have to get their houses ready, and when we see this each one starts making his house."

It was because the Wawilak men, who came after the snake had swallowed the women, saw the rainbow in the Mirrirmina pool that they knew the snake was inside the water hole. To the Murngin the rainbow is an announcement not only of heavy rains but also of the heavy floods at the height of the rainy season.

The rain is believed to be Yurlunggur himself or his saliva, with which he licked his two Wawilak victims and their children before he swallowed them. "The rain," said one of the leaders of the Liaalaomir clan, "is all the same as Muit's spit, or he can send it by his voice [thunder]. He can tell it to come." The oldest leader of the Liaalaomir clan, Dorng [thunder], said, "That big fellow, Bapa Indi, he is our father. Down here we call him Wirtit [common name for

[4] Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., *The Rainbow Serpent Myth of Australia.*

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

171 * 773 821

those of two sisters. Among the Aranda[38] the Magellan Clouds are the camps of the two evil men of whom the aborigines are afraid, but further west among the desert tribes the clouds are the camps of two spirits, one of which is a good and one an evil spirit.[39] In western New South Wales, a mother and a daughter live in the Magellan Clouds.[40]

In contrast to the widespread and similar myths of the moon, the Milky Way, the constellations of Orion and the Pleiades and of the Magellan Clouds, those belonging to the Southern Cross vary widely. At Groote Eylandt, p. 185, the stars of the Southern Cross are two fishermen and their cooking fires; at Yirrkalla, p. 196, a shark (the Pointers) chasing a stingray (the Cross) around the sky; and at Oenpelli, p. 187, a family of star-people. In western Central Australia, the Cross is the track of an eagle,[41] and in western New South Wales it is an eagle in the sky[42].

From the limited data collected on Arnhem Land astronomy, one can see in it the beginnings of a calendar, the arrival of the stars and their positions at sunrise or sunset denoting the time for certain happenings. Thus, at Groote Eylandt, p. 91, the wet season stops and the south-easterly winds start to blow when the constellation of Scorpio reaches a certain position in the evening sky; at Yirrkalla, the showing of Scorpio in the morning sky was a sign that the Malay fishermen would soon arrive to collect trepang, and when Arcturus is visible at sunrise the spike-rush, *rakia*, is ready for harvesting. There is little doubt that fuller investigation would show that the aborigines have evolved a workable calendar based on the movements of the heavenly bodies.

[805]

38. Spencer and Gillen (1899), p. 566.
39. Parker (1905), p. 97.
40. Parker (1905), p. 97.
41. Mountford (1948), p. 156.
42. Mountford (1949), field notes.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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rain towards the billabong (1). 21 depicts a *gungalung* (big-headed gecko lizard), playing around the Muruwul billabong after the rain; for these lizards always come out at the beginning of the rainy season, "and follow up the Julunggul". 532 773

This is a remarkable drawing of one aspect of sacred mythology in this region; it belongs to a large series dealing with all aspects of religious doctrine in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

This version tells us something of what happened to the Wauwalak after their swallowing. The first version also deals briefly with this aspect, as follows:

After the swallowing, the female Julunggul returned to Muruwul; there she vomited the Wauwalak and child, who were revivified by the bites of the ants, but were eventually re-swallowed. The Wauwalak spirits are still at the sacred well: "we can't see them, although they can see us, for now they belong to Julunggul". When they see human beings coming to this site, the Julunggul swallows them again in their spirit form, "for they are unable to walk about like ordinary people". [776]

The Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology serves to substantiate the Kunapipi rituals: a co-ordinating thread links the various events set out in the story, and these are symbolically expressed in the ceremonies. This myth is distributed among the three rituals already mentioned, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*; the *ma:ndiwalu* (the *marndiella* ceremony of Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 329–334), localized around the Roper and Rose Rivers, has not yet reached north-east Arnhem Land. Each of them expresses a particular feature of the myth. 773 796 [771]

The Kunapipi, adapted as it is to local traditional needs, has lost none of its symbolism and intent. In conventional Kunapipi mythology one of the principal themes is the Fertility Mother's pregnancy, and her giving birth to "Dreaming" folk: these people she kept in her womb, and "let them out" from time to time to perform sacred ritual. Finally, there is her death, and the totemites' enactment of the returning to and leaving the Mother's womb. The continual birth and rebirth of the totemites symbolize the sequence of the seasons, for Kunapipi had the power to send out the spirits of all the natural species. She was accompanied by the Rainbow Snake, her male counterpart. 773 776 796 [805]

At Yirrkalla, the Fertility Mothers are the Wauwalak: the peculiarly female characteristics of menstruation and afterbirth blood accentuate the concept of procreation. The presence of the Pythons (the male and female Snakes), their ejaculation of saliva (semen), their entry into the *murlk*, and the swallowing, complete the theme. The actual swallowing, said to mean coitus, may also symbolize the "return of the Wauwalak to the uterus of their Mother", as in con- 773 776 831

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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773 796 to these aborigines, is not just passive reliance on the Ancestral Beings, an inertia based on the hope that "something is bound to turn up" if they wait long enough. They must do their part to ensure the action of the Ancestral Beings; and their part is the ritual re-enactment of the relevant myth. This releases the "power" (or *dal*) inherent in the Ancestral Beings. This *dal* then finds full expression, and fertility is assured.

Thus the myth is thought to express the intentions of the Ancestral Beings, who possess the power to carry them out; and this power is [805] [789] released (or brought to bear) by sacred ritual. It arranges the seasons, maintains an adequate supply of food, and ensures the continuance of the group as a whole.

Before we proceed with the Kunapipi ritual, it is necessary to relate the final part of the Wauwalak myth, explaining the way in which this ritual was obtained and handed down from *wonga:r* times.

The three rituals, of which only one is to be treated here, are grouped together in terms of kinship ties. The *djunggawon*, an age- [561] grading ceremony, is called *katu*, son, and so is its principal ritual [534] object, the long *julunggul* wooden "trumpet". The *ngu:rlmak*, mainly religious in character and open only to adult postulants, is termed *ba:pa*, father, and so is its ceremonial hollow log *uwar* "drum". The *kunapipi* is *mari* (mother's mother's brother), like its [601] main ritual emblem, the *jelmalandji*. Although the relationship term of *mari* signifying the *kunapipi* is one that normally denotes age (that is, in the grandparents' generation), it is less important from the point of view of sacredness than the *ngu:rlmak*, said to be the major ritual of the trilogy. Sometimes, however, the *ngu:rlmak* is spoken of as "the father of the *kunapipi* side", while the *kunapipi* and *djunggawon* are classified together. But in practice it seems that, irrespective of the terminology of *mari*, the Kunapipi is really of secondary importance.

796 616 All the Wauwalak-Julunggul ceremonies belong to the *dua* clans or linguistic groups, and are under the direction of *dua* moiety totemic headmen; but members of the *jiritja* moiety assist in the dancing, singing, and making of ritual objects, and may even include certain of their own particular dances based on purely *jiritja* myth cycles. *Dua* ceremonial leaders, however, are recognized as the principal custodians of indigenous ritual, for they possess not only the Wauwalak but also the Djanggawul. In contrast to the more conservative *dua* groups, the *jiritja* have incorporated introduced themes[1] into their ritual life.

[113] 1. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Secular Figures of North-East Arnhem Land, *American Anthropologist*, 1949, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 213-222, with plates; Discovery of Pottery in North-Eastern Arnhem Land. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVII, Part 2; and R. Berndt, Badu, Islands of the Spirits, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, pp. 93-103; R. and C. Berndt, *Arnhem Land, Its History and Its People*, for publication.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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of invocation.] Most of the actors are smeared thickly with wallaby or kangaroo grease, and then with red-ochre. When they become hot from dancing the grease runs and drips off them, symbolizing the sweat of a pair of totemic animals (or human beings) after coitus. The shining grease is termed *laklak*, which is an alternate name for the younger Wauwalak sister.

When the second new moon appears from the beginning of the Kunapipi, depending, of course, on the proposed length of the ceremony, the men again go out to the sacred ground. Warner (*op. cit.* p. 301) mentions that the Muruwul well (or *nanggaru*) is abandoned at this stage; but in the eastern counterparts witnessed and discussed, it is retained. This appears to depend mainly on the inclination of the Kunapipi leaders, who at Yirrkalla usually take their pattern from Rose River. A large crescent-shaped trench is dug, the *ba'uma* (also called *kanala*, or *kanalara*, the central-western Northern Territory term). This is an extremely important symbol in the Kunapipi. It is usually about ten to twelve feet long, four to five feet deep, and about four feet wide, with earth piled along its concave sides. And it may signify any of the following: the track mark of the female Julunggul; the mark left by her fall, after swallowing the Wauwalak; the crescent-shaped position in which the Wauwalak rested in their *murlk*, before the Snake swallowed them; the clitoris of the Wauwalak; and, its real "inside" meaning, the uterus of the Wauwalak (as a substitute for the Djanggawul Fertility Mothers). Another smaller hole is also dug during some ceremonies; this is called the "younger hole", the uterus of the younger sister, whereas the larger *ba'uma*, also called *da:p* (or *dapi*, foreskin, symbolizing a dilly bag or uterus), is the uterus of the elder sister. But the principal hole is the *ba'uma*, and is always present in the Kunapipi.

When the *ba'uma* is completed, snake totem actors dance or writhe in the hole. Then two actors, one representing a man and another a woman, dance the "mating dance". The man has an erect bark penis and moves in pursuit of the "woman", who is desirous of coitus; they move towards the trench and dance around it, and at its entrance they simulate sexual intercourse. The Mother is said to be present in the *ba'uma*, and her life-giving powers are made operative by the sexual actions of the two dancers. ("The acting of coitus by the totemites is like the uterus being fertilized": the Mother is having sexual intercourse, so that she may produce.)

Various other dances are held in the *ba'uma*, at which the young initiates are present; the majority are related to coitus. There is, for example, the *dari:t* dance. Two men, representing male and female wagtails, sit opposite each other in the trench with legs folded beneath them; their knees touch, and in the dancing they simulate coitus. There is also the *molit'manina* (*molit* being an alternate name for Julunggul) dance, of the male and female Julunggul Rock

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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796 see the young initiates coming out of the bushes, emerging from the
881 uterus, all covered with red-ochre that symbolizes "the spring blood
778 of the Wauwalak". And the men call out to the women saying, "See those young men covered with the saliva of that Snake"; "but really," and the women are not officially supposed to know this, "they are covered with the spring blood". The women begin to call out, and return dancing to the main camp.

The *djepalmandji* are knocked down, and the young boys are taken to the men's camp. That night, "outside" Kunapipi songs are sung, and the men dance around the boys. Then with the men leading, and the initiates following, they all dance off in single file to the sacred ground.

Here the initiates' headbands are removed, and returned to the Kunapipi leader for use in the next rituals. After some sacred singing, all the men, together with the young boys, paint themselves [302] completely with red-ochre; at the same time, in the main camp, all the other men, women and children, whether *dua* or *jiritja*, do likewise. On everyone's back is outlined the Julunggul Snake, "so that [532] you can't see it". (The snake design is merged with the general red-ochring, so that only a bare outline is visible.) This design is sometimes extended across the chest or breasts, from left to right, to join the main snake pattern on the back; "in the beginning those Wauwalak did this, because of that big Julunggul". This painting is termed the "baptizing" (that is, ceremonial purification), and all are brushed with smoking ironwood branches which have been held in the fire.

The men return from the sacred ground to the main camp, and sitting in groups begin to sing the "outside" Kunapipi, while the women dance in the same way as they did during the first rituals. The young initiates return that evening to the single men's camp. The purification ceremony and singing may be held on succeeding evenings for about a week to a fortnight, when it is felt that sufficient precautions have been taken to prevent sickness.

This concludes the Yirrkalla Kunapipi ritual.

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773 Although we shall return in succeeding chapters to the ritual and
796 interpretation of the Kunapipi, it may be as well, at this juncture, to
794 survey briefly the foregoing material. It is apparent that Kunapipi ritual has been closely related to the Wauwalak mythology; this [805] expresses symbolically the aborigines' conception of an "eternal" sequence of the seasons, and the reproductive faculties of Nature, of which man is an incidental but dominating feature. This fundamental [776] belief is crystallized in a Fertility Mother (the Wauwalak as a transmutation of the Djangguwul) who embodies this concept, while the male representative of fructification also is present.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
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which is very far removed from the general picture of the Australian aborigine. 813 824

As the coast is approached, the country often becomes flat, and takes the form of wide plains through which the rivers flow sluggishly. On their estuarine reaches the rivers break up into innumerable arms, creeks and backwaters which are fringed with dense walls of mangroves. These brackish tidal reaches intersect the coastal plains, which are periodically flooded, becoming shallow lagoons which soon dry up, and leave miles of bare mud. This dries out and cracks so that it presents a tessellated appearance, and is often encrusted with deposits of salt. The estuarine reaches, tidal arms, and flood plains, yield very large quantities of food—chief of which are fish, for the capture of which many very specialised methods have been developed in Arnhem Land. Shellfish (*maipal*), including *laitjin*, (the wood-boring shipworm, *Teredo*) are also obtained in quantity in the mangrove zone. The shellfish are gathered at low water and *Teredo* are extracted from sodden logs uncovered at low tide, by splitting these with an axe and pulling them out by hand. 133 136 226

There are two well-defined seasons in Arnhem Land, the wet, or north-west monsoon, and the dry or south-east season. The "wet" extends from about December to March or April, when the wind is generally in the north-west quarter. During this period most of the annual rainfall—about 40 inches—occurs. The "dry" season extends from about April to November. At this season little rain falls except in far North-eastern Arnhem Land and for much of this period the wind blows steadily from the south-east. 132

This division of the year into two strongly-contrasted seasons has an important influence not only on the food supply of the people but also on their movements and occu- 221 805 813

221 pations, and therefore, on the nature of their camps and
805 house types. It may be noted in passing that the seasonal
813 influence on their lives and occupations is well appreciated by the natives themselves, and that they divide the annual cycle into six or more phases or seasons which they name from the winds, the weather conditions, or from the food supplies which characterise them. And again, they will name these phases, and state without hesitation the appropriate occupational sites at each of them, and their activities and food supplies which depend upon these seasonal conditions, with an insight and a precision that no white man who is not a trained ecologist and well versed in botany and zoology, could approach.

[133] During the wet season the river courses rise quickly and
221 soon overflow their banks so that the country is flooded for
[137] miles. The grass, especially on the plains, grows rank and
342 high—often more than six feet—and the people are con-
361 centrated in semi-permanent wet season camps in which the population may exceed one hundred. Here they lead an almost sedentary existence in contrast with their active nomadic life in the south-east season. At this time they construct houses, sometimes of large size—thatched with bark of tea-tree (*Melaleuca*) or of stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetro-*
[355] *donta*). Some of these houses are well built and are provided
[372] with sleeping platforms under which fires can be lighted as a protection against mosquitoes. They are also equipped with racks to carry food and utensils. Each house type has its own traditional form, type of construction and distinctive name, and is often developed in adaptation to a particular environment, or is determined by the building materials available in the vicinity. Nine or ten types of houses or shelters are recognised in Arnhem Land. These vary from simple breakwinds built on the windward side in the "dry"

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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vicinity of the speaker and 'limeru' includes everybody, far and wide, such as the human race.

Stone Age men have little use for numbers, for they have so little to count. If a definite number is used at all, it is usually under five. Fingers are the theoretical basis for counting, and one is 'wonggain'; two 'marrama'; three is two plus one; four is two and two; five is known as a hand, 'korng'. Six is hand plus one, and so on to ten, which is two hands, 'korng-marrama'. When pidgin is in use, the numerals are one to five, and after that it is 'big mob'.

Aboriginal languages are 'alive' and are being altered to meet new needs and conditions. Many new words have been absorbed as a result of the Macassars trading here, and so complete has been the acceptance and use of these terms, that the oldest nomads, some of whom travelled to Macassar on the trading proas, do not readily recognize their origin. With the advent of white traders, the Yulengor began to assimilate English words, and at Yirrkala I found a boy called Deamer (steamer) and a girl Giggerat (cigarette). Soap is 'jope', scissors are 'thither', razor is 'yeezer', cockroach 'karkrartj', and from one end of the country to the other, flying fox has been corrupted to 'bailanbok'. A nomad can do no other than reckon the hours of the day by the sun, and as a consequence, clocks and watches are also known as sun, 'wolu'.

'Dimit-dimirr' is the word for barbed fronds on the pandanus palm, as well as for thorny trees and spiky anemones, but now it is given to introduced lemon trees and barbed wire. 'To swim' is 'waitun' and to this they add the suffix 'mirry', something like our suffix 'ful', meaning 'full of', and the resultant 'waitunamirry' becomes a boat's propellor. 'Kurrta', denoting fire, firewood, or smoke, now serves for an engine, and 'kurrtamirry', full of fire, is a shotgun or rifle. Any law is 'rorm', and the verb 'to give' is 'gurrpan', so that to teach something is 'rormgurrpan',